

OPERA SUPERS OF IOWA CITY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME TWO NO. 1 SEPTEMBER 1986 EDITOR: ARTHUR CANTER 338-1217
30 BROOKFIELD DR. IOWA CITY, IA 52240

A SPECIAL INVITATION.....

Opera Supers will be hosting a reception for the School of Music's new faculty, DAVID ARNOLD, TAMARA BROOKS, and ARTHUR GREENE on Sunday, September 21st from 4 to 6 p.m. in the lounge of the Music Building. We will have a short business meeting at 3:00 just prior to the reception. Whether or not you will be able to be one of our active volunteers this coming year, please come, bring a guest, and help us welcome these new and exciting people.

If you are planning to attend or can help with refreshments for the reception, please contact Miriam Canter (338-1217) or Mona Shaw (353-5626).

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Welcome back to the Newsletter now beginning its second volume with the start of the academic year 1986-87. Our first volume's venture appears to have been a success except for some personal disappointments that I will get to. The Opera Supers can look back at last year with pride in what we accomplished for the performances of BORIS GODUNOV and MADAME BUTTERFLY. We have learned many things about what we can do best and in what areas our assistance and support are needed. We have an organization that is flexible and attuned to its members as well as to the people involved in Opera Theater and opera productions at the University. We assist them where we can and they make it easy for us to do so. I cannot think of a better form of relationship. What we need is more active members. Those of you reading this who are not active Opera Supers, be advised that your activity need only be as much as you can find the time for and for functions that are within your capabilities and interests. It may be a one time thing, an infrequent or a regular activity. It is not possible to be specific as to how much participation makes you an active super. It can vary from a simple clerical act, passing along material, helping with publicity, collecting information, helping in productions, telephoning, helping with refreshments, hosting groups, helping the Newsletter editor (yes, even that), all the kinds of activities support group volunteers do in the various arts. Don't stay in the background, move out and get involved! You will meet persons interested in opera in all its ramifications. You will meet Opera Theater staff and performers. You will learn the background and the details of opera productions. You can talk to adults about common and exceptional interests. You can share in the rewards of these things as well as in the fruits of our activities. We reward ourselves with special events and parties. In the future we hope to offer opportunities to take trips as a group to regional opera performances, or whatever the Opera Supers can arrange. Your ideas are welcome. Attend one of our meetings and express your views. If you cannot attend a meeting, write to the editor of the Newsletter who can pass your words, suggestions or questions to the rest of the Supers.

The scarcity of direct communication to the Newsletter is one of the disappointments your editor has suffered. This includes the lack of response to the Opera quizzes.

Letter Cont.:

What does it take to have you respond? Two people entered the BORIS quiz. Both earned prizes of individually made audio cassette tapes of selections from my own collection of opera. Only one person entered--and correctly answered--the BUTTERFLY quiz. He happens to be Iowa City's "professional" collector of recorded opera. Believe it when I say it was most difficult for me to come up with an opera--or operetta, in this case--selection that he did not have, but I did. That is unlikely to happen again. For one thing, I can't match his collection and for another, I shall disqualify him and trust he'll understand. But he is a Super, having provided some material for use in one of the opera productions. For a DON GIOVANNI quiz, I may have to offer a different kind of prize to attract entrants. What does it take to enter a quiz, assuming you are eligible? Up to now, all it took was the libretto that could be found in a library copy of the recorded opera album, if not one you owned, or a detailed summary in one of the books available to opera lovers, such as Kobbe's. You are not expected to know the answer in your head. The purpose is to get you interested enough to look something up and in doing so, get some familiarity with the target opera before you attend its performance. From the foregoing, you now know, if you did not already, that next spring's opera will be DON GIOVANNI and the focus of some of the newsletters. I intend to include a variety of material in the newsletters and your input will be appreciated. I am retiring from my faculty position at the end of September. Among the pursuits I shall engage in during my change in status will be the Newsletter, if agreeable to the Supers, and whatever else in the way of "research" on things operatic I may be asked to do.

REPORT OF THE OPERA SUPERS MEETING OF JUNE 30, 1986:

The following is only a brief summary of what transpired during the last meeting of the academic year 1985-86. Dr. Marilyn Somville and Larry Eckholt of the Iowa Foundation spoke to the group about the various factors and problems involved in creation of an umbrella group to cover the University Symphony, Center For New Music, Opera Theater and special ensembles. (see the July, Volume 1, No. 7 issue of the Newsletter for background.)

Discussion led to suggestions for methods of attacking the problems and meeting the needs of the various groups. Mona Shaw took over the regular business meeting. Committee reports were heard and publicity plans and special events for the July performance of MADAME BUTTERFLY were reviewed. Arrangements for the Strike Party were discussed, as were the plans for the Supers after-the-performance party, held on July 29. The meeting adjourned with the usual refreshments and relaxation.

OTHER NEWS:

The Strike Party went off very well and was highly appreciated by all persons involved in striking the BUTTERFLY set. We have learned how to manage this event successfully.

The Supers party was held as planned, hosted most graciously by the Knapps and enjoyed by the Supers, members of the Opera Theater, performers, staff and their families. We had mostly Japanese dishes--or their approximations--and appropriate beverages for all ages. If you attended you know what I meant earlier about our rewarding ourselves by such an event. If you did not attend, join us and look forward to an after the DON party if not a pre-DON reception (puns intended.)

NEW OPERA FACULTY:

As most of you know by now, John Van Cura left the Iowa faculty to join Baylor University in Waco, Texas. We will miss John but the life of the School of Music as life anywhere must go on and grow. New life is given to us through the efforts of Dr. Somville who has secured two temporary appointments from the roster of the New York City Opera: David Arnold, and Stephen Dickson, both baritones, who come to us with impressive credentials.

Mr. Arnold, who will be with us first semester, made his Metropolitan debut in 1983 as Enrico in Lucia di Lammermoor and has also sung with the New York City Opera, Opera Company of Boston, San Francisco Opera and English National Opera, to name a few. He was heard as Jake in the Met's production of Porgy and Bess, Escamillo in Carmen performed by the Tulsa Company and has recorded the Gurrelieder (Schoenberg) with Ozawa and the Boston Symphony for Philips.

Mr. Dickson, who will join us second semester, made his debut with the Opera Theater of St. Louis in Albert Herring, has sung in Monte Carlo, Nice, San Francisco, the Lyric of Chicago, Theatre Musical de Paris, and elsewhere in Europe before making his debut at the Metropolitan opera singing Papageno in the Magic Flute in 1982.

We are also very excited about new faculty members Tamara Brooks and Arthur Greene. Brooks is replacing Don Moses as the School's choral conductor. She was most recently the Music Director and Conductor of the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia. She was also Chairman of the Music Department of Haverford College, where she also headed the orchestral and choral programs of Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges. Recent choral and orchestral conducting engagements have included performances at Alice Tully Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York, and the Academy of Music in Philadelphia.

Greene, piano, has arrived just after winning first place in the famous William Kapell Competition held at the University of Maryland. He also recently appeared with the National Symphony under Julius Rudel at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C. and with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Raymond Leppard. Next January 7th he is scheduled to perform in recital at Carnegie Hall.

Don't miss the opportunity to meet these prestigious people at our reception on September 21st.

SOURCES FOR OPERA RECORDINGS AND MATERIAL:

Those who seek sources from Iowa City have to contend with Discount Records on Dubuque St. They do carry a fairly good collection of albums from time to time but selections are very scanty. One of the broadest selection of tapes (open reel and cassette) you'll find anywhere is available by mail from the COLLECTOR'S VAULT, 90 Amherst, Iowa City (Stephen Slezak.) I also like to mail order from ROSE RECORDS, 214 Wabash Ave., Chicago IL 60604. Ask to be put on their mailing list. They specialize in cut-outs but have a wide stock of current opera albums including hard to find European labels, at discount prices. OPERAWORLD, 374 Congress St., Boston MA 02210 does mail order current albums and CDs. They also list books and paperbacks on opera topics that are hard to find locally. They can provide you with the English National Opera libretti which are among the most informative in print anywhere as well as the G. Schirmer collection. Get an ENO libretto and you will learn the background of the opera, its librettist, the composer and performance history of the opera itself and its libretto in the original and English translation (about \$4.95 per copy.)

ANSWERS TO MADAME BUTTERFLY QUIZ: (see June, Volume 1, No. 6 issue)

1. Cio-Cio San was from the Omara District of Nagasaki.
2. The baby's name is "Sorrow" but will be changed to "Joy" when Pinkerton, his father, returns.
3. "About two dozen" relatives attended the wedding: a mother-in-law, grandmother, cousins, and two uncles.
4. Pinkerton's ship was the "Abraham Lincoln."

No entries were received for Quiz No. 2 (see Volume 1, No. 7.) Maybe it was too obscure. I hoped somebody did have the answers because I have only part of it.

IMPORTANT DATES:

New Season Opening meeting: Sun. Sept. 21 at 3:00 pm.

New Faculty Welcoming Reception: Sun. Sept. 21--4-6 p.m.

Both are in the Music Building Lounge. Call Miriam Canter (338-1217) or Mona Shaw (353-5626) for details. Please come!

Faculty Recital, PAULA BOIRE, soprano, Sun., 9/21 at 8 pm in Clapp

The University of Iowa

School of Music

Iowa City, Iowa 52242